

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

## A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 61.—THIRD SERIES.

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1890.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

### KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

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"A Faire Damsell," etc., etc.*

#### CHAPTER XXXII. HOEL KNOWS ALL.

AMICE KESTELL had been waiting patiently for guidance; she had become more silent, more shy and frightened in the presence of her parents; even with Elva she now and then seemed to have lost her old trust. She was like a person who is always listening for the arrival of some one. Had Elva been less busy, and less taken up with her own affairs, she would have been more keenly alive to her sister's strange looks and conduct. As it was, she only made happy plans for the future; Amice should often stay in London with her, and she would be brought forward, and lose her shyness in the pleasure of having her musical talents appreciated.

Just now Amice's spirituality somewhat jarred on Elva; she could not feel much response herself, and the glimpses of a possible life of sacrifice faded away. This was natural, considering Hoel filled up all her heart and her mind.

It so happened that Elva's approaching wedding had much excited her cousins, the Fitzgeralds, and that a pressing invitation to come to town had arrived on the same day that Elva had written to Hoel. Mrs. Kestell was so anxious that her daughter should accept, that Elva reluctantly agreed to go and spend two nights in London, and get through her shopping with her cousins' help, instead of going up with Amice for the day. It was impossible for them both to leave home

together, for Mrs. Kestell could not bear the idea of being without one daughter; and Elva, knowing how busy she should be, and that most likely Hoel would be seeing after his uncle's affairs, determined not to tell him. Besides, the Fitzgeralds were so very foolish, and so fast, that Hoel would not like them; he was so particular about women, and his creed about them included a clause against flirting.

Amice seemed almost glad to be alone, she had to put such a strain upon herself in order to appear at all cheerful, that she looked forward to two days of intense quiet. She determined that she would somehow manage not to be alone with her father, for it was this she so much dreaded.

Almost unconsciously, when she had done her usual cottage-visiting, she turned her steps towards the Home Farm. The silence of the woods was so calming, and here she could think out her plan about Symee. Whenever she passed the spot where she had found Jesse that memorable evening, the whole scene came back painfully to her. Some minds can recall so vividly, that it almost seems to them as if they saw with their worldly eyes the scenes they imagine.

To-day, as Amice passed the spot, she stopped involuntarily, she fancied she saw Jesse sitting there, plunged in despair; she fancied that once more she beheld the dejected figure, the look of misery on the strong features, the . . .

Amice had an inward shudder; she pressed her hand over her eyes. Was the curse coming upon her again, that past scenes forced themselves on her as new realities, for surely in the same spot, in the same attitude, Jesse was there!

Her heart seemed to stop beating, wild fancies rushed through her brain that Jesse

had appeared to her again to claim her help against something—or somebody, that she had waited too long, and that Herbert Heaton had not yet been to London.

She seemed rooted to the spot, not daring to approach nearer to that figure, for fear it should vanish into thin air, and thus confirm her belief that it was a spirit come to reproach her; but Amice was brave. In another moment she resolved to go forward, and just as the quiet evening breeze swept through the tall firs, and shook the dead, crisp branches, she took a step forward and murmured "Mr. Vicary."

The figure started up. It was no ghost; yet it was not Jesse that suddenly turned towards her, but Hoel Fenner!

Amice was not prepared for Hoel's appearance in this spot. But this fact did not startle her. She knew Elva had not told him she was in London, so his presence could not concern her sister; but what did startle her now was the expression of Hoel's face. To her poor, overwrought brain it seemed to be merely a repetition of Jesse Vicary's look, only worse, for Jesse's usual expression was somewhat grave and severe, whilst Hoel's had been always placid and calm. For three or four seconds the two stood there speechless, and almost motionless; only once again Amice passed her hand over her brow, and her large blue eyes looked bewildered.

It was Hoel who first broke the silence; but his voice seemed changed. Could it be the same man who had laughed so happily, and talked so amusingly, only a few weeks ago?

"Miss Kestell, I have frightened you," he said. "Don't look so startled. I was a little surprised at seeing you here, just because I was thinking of you—wanting you."

"Me!" said Amice, leaning against a fir-trunk in order to recover herself, and find strength to be quite natural.

"Yes, you; I wished for you intensely, and you came. We sometimes are frightened when our wishes are realised in this way."

"You want to see Elva," said Amice, taking no notice of his words. "I am sorry she is in London for two days. She is with the Fitzgeralds, our cousins. She will be so disappointed to know you came when she was away. She fancied you were busy with your uncle's affairs."

"I am glad she is away," said Hoel,

still in an altered voice. "Do not tell her I have been; do not mention our meeting. It was you I wanted to see, you alone. It is getting chilly; will you walk towards the farm, or where can we go?"

Amice looked slowly up into Hoel's face with the thought that he must have gone mad; and a cold feeling came at her heart as she said to herself: "Is Elva to suffer, too? Will it reach her, my own noble-hearted sister, who has never had my feelings? No, not her, let me suffer doubly for her."

"I do not understand you, Mr. Fenner," she said, aloud, and with as much dignity as she could muster. "Why do you talk so strangely? What have we got to do with each other? Let me go by. I prefer walking home alone. I should not have disturbed you just now, but I fancied you were some one else."

"Some one else! who, then?"

Amice did not answer. What made Mr. Fenner so strange in his manner?

"I beg your pardon," continued Hoel. "I hardly know what I am saying. Forgive me, I have annoyed you; think no more about it. Do you remember, Miss Amice, that you once asked me a question. Before my uncle died I asked him who was——"

Amice suddenly seemed to wake up, the frigid expression she had put on gave place to a look of intense horror, her face became deadly pale, so that even Hoel, who was more anxious about his own thoughts than hers, noticed it.

She put her hand on his arm as a suppliant might do, and her tone was intensely humble.

"Yes, yes, I know. I asked you who was—John Pellew. Tell me, quickly, and then please leave me. I want to go on to the farm."

"Tell me first why you want to know."

"No, no, I cannot."

"Has he anything to do with you; with your family? Tell me. It is very important to me."

"To you? Then you know?"

Amice's hands sank listlessly by her side, and then she clasped them in order to get some support.

"Know what?" said Hoel, fiercely.

"You know. Yes, I can see it in your face. You know about the curse. Oh, Elva, Elva!"

"What do you mean?" said Hoel, in low, indignant, almost passionate, tones. "Can you speak plainly, openly, and not with this mystery? I know. Yes, yes, I

know; or, I will know. Speak plainly. I insist upon it."

Amice was again frightened. What had she said? Did he, or did he not know that strange mystery that haunted her life? If he did not know, what had she said?

She shook her head.

"Tell me what your uncle said."

"John Pellew was a distant cousin of mine. He was not thought very highly of, and he died young in India."

Hoel said this in a studied, cold manner, and waited, looking intensely at Amice as he did so. On her side, she seemed to take in the simple words with difficulty.

"Is that all?" she said at last.

"What more will you have?"

"I don't know. He died young in India?"

"Yes."

"Did he—did your uncle know if he was poor?"

"The youngest of three is not likely to have been rich; but I will find out the rest."

"No," said Amice, quickly. "No, please, Mr. Fenner, don't find out any more. Leave it alone; leave it to me, for Elva's sake, if you love her."

"Hush; don't mention her, please. You asked me to leave you. Good-bye; I am going. I shall find out the rest; before long I shall know."

He unfolded his arms and picked up his stick, which had fallen on the needle-covered earth.

Amice never uttered another word. She watched Hoel striding away up the path, and, in a terror of uncertainty, she followed slowly behind.

"What does it all mean, and what has papa to do with John Pellew? He died poor; then, surely—but he will find out. He knows, I feel sure; he knows something."

Hoel Fenner walked on as if the Furies were behind him. He had many miles to get over before he could reach Greystone, and his shortest way would have been by the Pools; but taking that path he would have to pass Rushbrook, and this he would not do, so, leaving the wood, he struck across country till he reached the high road leading to the town.

He was late for his dinner, but scarcely minded that, and was not over-pleased when the landlord insisted on talking to him.

"I think, sir, since I've seen your name

on your luggage, you must be the gentleman who was in our railway accident? I hope, sir, you've recovered."

"Yes, quite."

"There's only one poor man that's never got away from here, and they do say his days are numbered. He's at the little public close by. Mr. Kestell of Greystone, sir, has been kindness itself to the man."

"Yes, I remember—Button. I should like to see him. I——" Hoel paused.

"I will go and see him after dinner, and I shall be returning to town to-morrow morning."

Hoel ate his dinner mechanically, he did not even know what he was eating; he never gave a thought to his weariness; there was time enough for that by-and-by.

When he entered the small room where Button lay in bed, he was struck by the look of death on the man's face. Drink had hastened on the end. Had he not been able to get the curse of his life, Joe Button might have pulled through. Strong and hale, he had not resisted his craving; and in his weakness, and with the ample means provided by Mr. Kestell, how was he to deny himself?

At first Button took Hoel for Mr. Kestell, then shaking off his lethargy, he roused himself.

"Ah, sir, so we were in the same accident. It's done for me. And yet I might have been in a better position. If I do get over this cursed illness, I'll go and claim my papers. Mr. Kestell has got them. They're no good to me; but yet I like to show people I might have been as rich as Kestell of Greystones. It's the rich that get all the good things. Yes, sir, we owned Westacre Lands—the place where the mines were found—the mines that have made Mr. Kestell so rich. We ought to have held on longer."

"You sold them to him," said Hoel, indifferently.

"No, sir, not to him, but to another—a young gentleman; it's in the deeds—Mr. John Pellew."

"John Pellew!" gasped Hoel. "What became of him? Speak out, man."

Button looked surprised.

"Did you happen to know him, sir? They say he died, and sold his right to Mr. Kestell. If he had lived he would have took on as much as I've done, I dare say; but, there, he died, and it was Mr. Kestell who had it all. Money goes to money."

"Who said he sold his land to Mr. Kestell?" said Hoel, stooping down toward Button, who was getting thick in his speech.

"Who said it? Who said it? Why—he did, he did—Mr. Kestell. I don't blame him more than others, sir. Mr. Kestell's been liberal, he let me work on there some time; but it was——"

"I remember; the drink, man. You ruined yourself."

"If you didn't mind, sir, just giving me a trifle—lending me, I mean—when Mr. Kestell comes again I'll return it. I haven't a sixpence to bless myself with. It's hard on a man who might have been rich."

"Pshaw, man! A trifle! God forbid I should give you even sixpence. Look here, I am going to Westacre Lands to-morrow, and I shall enquire into your story. Take my advice, give up the drink, and even now you may pull through. Good-night."

#### CHAPTER XXXIII. MISTAKEN SILENCE.

JESSE VICARY had managed to find a stock of patience—if patience was the word to apply to his state of mind. In a week he would know Mr. Fenner's version of the story; and then, forming his own conclusions, he would act for himself. Jesse was, during this time, in a curious mental condition; a hard crust seemed to be forming over his natural goodness. He walked more firmly, and felt an unusual antagonism to his kind. He could have expressed his state of mind in the words, that his hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him. Pride seems but a poor comfort to an aching heart; the salve it gives is like veneer to rotten wood—it cannot make whole, it can only deceive casual glances.

His poor neighbours saw but little of him at this time. He could not feel any pity for them; their lot, miserable as it was, appeared less false than his. They were, most of them, either contented with their surroundings, or else debasing themselves with their eyes open. Why should either of these two classes deserve pity when he, who had striven so hard to rise all his life, was to be crushed by a man who should, at best, offer him protection?

Jesse turned from human beings and opened his books. The dead offered more consolation than the living. Their truth, their falsehood, could be proved; or, if not

proved—well, then doubted without stint. So Jesse spent all his spare hours, and some which had better have been spent in sleep, in poring over old musty volumes. Some of his favourite Latin authors were brought out again; but with them came the remembrance of his old master, so he preferred his mathematics. They took all his brains and left him no more room for thought.

So the week dragged wearily along, and every now and then Jesse tried, very ineffectively, to make out his plan of revenge. Some say revenge is sweet; but the planning is surely harassing work. Will it fail or will it succeed? A plan of revenge that may fail is by no means sweet; and much was against Jesse's grand idea of succeeding.

The world might call him mad, and demand proofs, or even might refuse to believe the proofs he meant to bring. The world is usually inclined to side with the rich and powerful, for it is altogether easier and safer in the long run; and Jesse recognised this, and it made him still more bitter.

It was at this time that he mentally asked the great question "Why?" and would not let the answer reach his heart. It is by no means all questioners who wish to receive answers; they prefer knocking to listening for the permission to enter. The knocking provides the excuse for impatience and the self-pity.

Any other trial might not have found Jesse wanting. He could have mastered poverty, neglect, ill-success; but shame—no, this seemed to raise all his bad feelings, though the change was not visible to the outer world.

Till a man has been tried in his weakest point, let him not cast a stone at one who has reached the decisive turn in his life's journey. As to visions of beauty and goodness, they had faded entirely from Jesse's vision. He worked, read, slept, ate, came in and went out with clock-like regularity; but otherwise he was not himself, and, worst of all punishments, he knew it. Revenge—it was coming slowly, but surely; and it was this giant image he watched so keenly. He liked to see it become more shapely, more defined; he liked to see it advance one step daily nearer to him. It was his Juggernaut, and he was but waiting to throw himself before it in adoration.

But all this time not a word had he



heard from Mr. Fenner. Still he trusted him. Belief in his friends died hard with Jesse; he judged others by himself. So intense were his affections that he could make grand allowances till his faith was shattered; then Jesse was apt to exaggerate the fault.

At last the day dawned. It was Saturday, and he should be home early from work. It was a bright, sunny day, even in London, after the mist and fog had cleared off. Even Golden Sparrow Street could not shut out the sky; indeed, the houses, being low and mean, allowed a greater expanse to be seen. On any other day Jesse might have taken a long trudge, but to-day he dared not go far. What time would Mr. Fenner come? Not before the evening; or, yes, knowing Jesse would be at home, he might look in earlier.

"Liza, when she triumphantly brought up the tea-things, found Mr. Vicary walking up and down like a caged animal, and for once in her life she dared not address him a word.

"Liza," said Jesse, suddenly, "if Mr. Fenner calls, show him upstairs at once. Don't imagine I am out, because I shall stay in till he comes."

And then he sat down to his solitary meal, whilst to aggravate his feelings still more, thoughts of Symee filled his mind, and would not be driven out.

Symee preferred comfort and plenty with servitude, to liberty and a crust. Symee deserved her fate. She was a woman, weak, easily led, afraid to do right or wrong. Well, she had chosen; it was not he, Jesse, who should now expatriate himself in order to have to bear with a weak girl's reproaches. She had had her choice, let her abide by it.

Six o'clock, seven o'clock, and no Hoel Fenner. He would not come now till late. The dinner-hour of the rich was a feast which could not be moved. What if he, too, were going to fail him, and he would not appear at all? What—Jesse was beginning to lose faith even in Hoel Fenner, when he heard footsteps on the stairs. Was knowledge near at hand; was revenge coming; was Mr. Fenner going to treat the matter lightly again?

The door opened, and Hoel Fenner entered.

The lamp shed its light only on a part of the room. It did not at once disclose Hoel's face plainly; unlike his usual habit, it was Jesse who spoke first, and as he held

out his hand, all his natural diffidence seemed to have forsaken him.

"You are come, Mr. Fenner. I was beginning to think you had forgotten me and my very unimportant affairs; besides, this must be about your dinner-hour. Shut the door, 'Liza, and let no one else come up. Will you sit by the fire? It is chilly now in the evening."

"Thank you," said Hoel, "it does not matter where." The altered tone, the utter change of manner, was so striking that Jesse stopped short and began to wonder what had happened. He did not imagine it had anything to do with him or his business; but, all the same, it was too marked to be overlooked. Jesse's unnatural eloquence received a check. He even wondered if it had displeased Hoel, who, of course, was accustomed to a certain veiled respect, which, before now, Jesse had willingly accorded him. Jesse, even now, could not see Hoel's face clearly. He had seated himself where the shadow fell.

"You have thought me a little exacting," said Jesse.

"I knew you must be expecting me; but I own I put off coming as long as possible; besides, I have been three times out of town, and, perhaps, you are not aware that my uncle—the one I have mentioned as having brought me up—died suddenly. He was buried yesterday."

"Death seems nothing very terrible to a solitary man like me; but I suppose to the rich there may be many regrets at leaving life."

"We are all alike, I suppose, in wishing to live as long as possible," said Hoel; and, strange as it seemed, it was as if the two men had now changed places—now it was Hoel who was blunt and straightforward, and Jesse inclined to show off a cynicism that fitted him but badly.

There was a pause—a pause which tried Jesse intensely, as he was thinking most about himself. Again it was he who broke the silence.

"I am afraid my business must have been an extra worry—a nuisance in fact; but you know I was willing to go my own way. I did not wish to force my affairs upon the shoulders of any one."

"I have had very little to do with my uncle's affairs," said Hoel, in the same strange, unnatural voice, as if he had not heard Jesse's remark. "The family lawyer is a very useful man on these occasions, and is willing to undertake all the fuss

that takes place when a man dies suddenly. Besides, my uncle did not sign his last will, and I count for nothing in the one that stands."

Jesse, thus forced to leave his own thoughts, was ready to give sympathy.

"That seems hard, or would seem so to some men, but I do not think it will influence you much, Mr. Fenner. To me, you know money means very little. A room to sleep in and a crust of bread are all that is necessary to man, and even if one's arms cannot provide these, there is the workhouse, though I own to a slight dislike of that idea." Jesse laughed. "Still, I cannot altogether say I would prefer to starve than to enter the House, as the poor do. On the whole, it is less selfish to save your fellow creatures the pain of finding you dead on a doorstep, or other such hospitable refuge."

"You are very happy, Vicary, you have only yourself to think of."

"Happy!"

This time the laugh was truly cynical.

"Yes, happy. You can fall back on past experience. You can have nothing to reproach yourself with; but you cannot be stranded suddenly. You cannot find yourself in a relentless storm, where nothing seems able to shelter you, and where there's not even a plank one can grasp. I don't know why I've come here to-night. Well, yes, I was afraid you would think less of me; and I can't afford to lose any one's good opinion just now. I promised I would come. But look here, Vicary, it's no use beating about the bush in this insane manner, let me tell you at once, that, though I've come, I can do you no earthly good."

Hoel rested his elbow on the table, and with his well-shaped hand he shaded his face.

Still Jesse was entirely in the dark.

"Pray, don't let that distress you, Mr. Fenner. I never expected much result, as you know, least of all did I wish to have bothered you with my affairs just at a time when you were having troubles of your own. I have no relations except Symee; but I can understand that losing even one who did not much interest me would touch me in spite of myself. As for my own plans, I am prepared to fight on alone. You might have cleared the way; but what more could you have done? In your position, too, it was most generous, most kind of you to undertake to give me help, and please do not think I am un-

grateful; it would really pain me to believe you thought so."

"You cannot understand my motives, Vicary; but, at least, my inability to help you was not caused by inaction."

Jesse felt the blood mount to his face.

"Then you tried, and failed to discover anything?"

"I tried."

"And failed?"

Hoel did not remove his hand, so that Jesse could still see nothing of the expression. The situation was becoming exasperating.

"No."

Another pause, more awful than the others.

"Then, for Heaven's sake," said Jesse, starting up, and forgetting everything about relative positions, everything but the knowledge that the man before him had succeeded in finding out what he wanted to know, and yet that he would not tell him. "Then, for Heaven's sake, why do you not tell me? Is it worse than I told you? How can it be? Will my vengeance be greater because I am sure? Do you think that ignorance will lessen my bitter feelings? Mr. Fenner, you have been a kind friend to me, till now. I do not forget it, I am not ungrateful; but if you cannot understand it, at least believe me when I tell you that this is no laughing matter to me, that whatever you, or what some people call the world, think, to me it is of the utmost importance; believe, too, that I have been living an insupportable life since I saw you, that you cannot, through any false notions of sparing me, wish to withhold the truth from me, however bad it is."

These words had rushed out like a pent-up torrent. Jesse Vicary never paused to think of anything or any one, his one effort was to prevent himself from shaking the truth out of the man before him. Something in the intense sadness of that immovable figure prevented him.

"Vicary, stop, for pity's sake. Remember that there are more persons than one to be considered in this question. But how can you consider? You have not the power. You cannot know my feelings, my reasonings; but, look here, you say that I have been a friend to you. I don't altogether accept the term; but let that pass. If you consider me a friend, do something for me. If I promised to bring you back an answer, let me off my promise, because — because — unless you hold me to it, Vicary, I cannot tell you."

Jesse sank down on his chair again, and in a kind of amazed stupor he repeated :

"You cannot tell me?"

"No."

"But you cannot prevent my finding out in my own way. You hardly understand my motives, or what I conjecture to be the truth."

"No, I cannot."

"Then, by Heaven, I will find out everything, and without any one's help."

"I feared so; but forgive me, Vicary, if you only knew, if—no, I cannot offer advice; but can I say anything to make you desist? Look here, will you believe me when I tell you that, though I am tongue-tied, this I am sure of, working alone, you will go on the wrong track. Be generous. Leave it alone, Vicary. I am beginning to think that an overruling Providence is not a myth. Wait a few years—be patient."

"So that others may enjoy the fruit of my sufferings? No, I will not; if God is just, then He cannot mind man seeking for that justice. Be it long or short, I will seek for it."

Hoel got up, Jesse's words had stung him like hail.

"Don't judge harshly, Vicary. You have let me off my promise. Thank you. Will you take my hand and forgive me?"

Vicary gave his hand, but there was nothing of the old grasp in it.

"Yes, I let you off, Mr. Fenner, I can do my work alone. I am sorry I ever troubled you with the story."

"Good heavens," said Hoel, as he walked away, "he little guesses the truth, and yet I—no, I could not tell him."

### EMIN PASHA.

#### HIS WORK AND RESCUE.

Two years ago we gave some notes on the life and work of Dr. Edward Schnitzer, known to the world as Emin Pasha, to whose rescue Mr. H. M. Stanley was then fighting his way from the Congo. We promised then to return to the subject when the result of Stanley's expedition was known; and the time now seems opportune.

There is something strangely pathetic in the fact that, while the gallant explorer and reliever returned in triumph, to be fêted and lionised, and universally commended for his unquestionably great and memorable achievement, the heroic being

for whom it was undertaken was lying, in almost mortal sickness, at the Coast from which he had been shut out for so many weary and trying years.

There has been no more heroic figure in African history—save Livingstone and Gordon—than this devoted and modest German doctor. Yet the world seems inclined to lose sight of what he has done in the blaze of what has been done for him. By a curious irony of fate, the rescuer has been exalted to a more brilliant height than the rescued. For a couple of years of costly exploration and hardship, Stanley is receiving a larger meed of praise than Emin for a dozen years of noble endeavour and unselfish devotion to the cause of science and civilisation, of faithful adherence to that which he conceived to be his inherited duty, and of steadfast persistence against innumerable difficulties, and in the face of ever-present dangers.

We do not dispute the splendour of Stanley's achievement, and we do not grudge him the glory he has so gallantly won; but we do deplore that the noble figure of Emin should be overshadowed by the more vigorous individuality of the other.

The newspapers have told us enough of what Stanley has done, and he himself will presently tell us more. Let us go back a little, and see what Emin has done.

He went out, as we have already shown, about 1876, to the Soudan, as medical attaché to Gordon's staff, and, in 1878, became Governor of the Equatorial Province. But the Soudan is a wide and vague territory, and the limits and character of the Equatorial Province seem even yet not to be understood by most people. Let us, therefore, be a little more particular.

The Egyptian Soudan, as it existed in Gordon's time, extended from about twenty-one degrees north latitude—which may be considered the limit of Egypt proper—to near the Equator, and it was divided into five governmental districts. The first extended from the borders of Egypt to Khartoum, and was bounded on the east by the Red Sea, and on the west by the twenty-eighth meridian. The second was the Pashalik of Sennaar; the third that of Kordofan; and the fourth that of Darfur; all sufficiently well marked on the maps, and familiar enough in connection with British exploits and complications in Egypt. The fifth district was that which was called the Equatorial Province, which, north and south,

nominally extended from Khartoum to the Albert Nyanza. This, again, was divided into three commands: the Rohl Province, extending from the ninth to the sixth parallel, and from the Nile to the twenty-fourth meridian; the Bahr-el-Ghazal, now best remembered in connection with the name of its last unhappy Governor, Lupton Bey, who, with his territory, was betrayed, in 1884, into the hands of the Mahdists; and the Equatorial Province proper, now ever to be associated with the name of Emin Pasha. This last joined the Rohl Province in the north at the ninth parallel, and, as far as Lado, was bounded on the west by the Nile; but south of Lado it spread out and was supposed to embrace nearly the whole of the Albert Lake.

The history of this immense territory is a curious and a chequered one. More than fifty years ago, Mehemet Ali went out from Egypt to extend his dominions as Vali or Viceroy—for the title of Khedive was not adopted till 1867—to the south. At the junction of the White and Blue Niles he found a small village, where he built a fort around which gradually became a considerable city, and the centre of the caravan-routes to the interior, and of the river-traffic to Egypt.

This was Khartoum, and from there expeditions were regularly despatched to the south for the produce of the country, which consisted chiefly of slaves and ivory. For twenty years the slave-hunters carried on their atrocities unsuspected of Europeans, until Sir Samuel Baker, after meeting Speke and Grant at Gondokoro—now superseded by Lado, Emin's late capital—and discovering the Albert Nyanza, returned to England through the country which was being devastated by the ruthless dealers in human flesh. It was the reports given by these travellers that caused pressure to be brought to bear upon the Egyptian Government to do something to put an end to the iniquitous trade. Fortunes were being rapidly made in it when Ismail Pasha, the first Khedive, succeeded to the Government in Egypt in 1863. Ismail was both an able and an ambitious man. He conceived the idea of forming a great African empire absolutely independent of his suzerain, the Sultan of Turkey. But he knew that he could not throw off the Ottoman yoke without the assent, and perhaps the assistance, of England, so he shrewdly endeavoured to propitiate British public opinion while also prosecuting a

policy of annexation in the south. The nearer districts of Darfur and Kordofan he subjugated by his own officers, but to carry out the dream of Equatorial Empire he needed other emissaries.

Thus it was that Sir Samuel Baker, who had revealed the iniquities of the Soudanese slave-trade, was placed in command of an expedition to subdue to Egyptian authority the countries around, and to the south of Gondokoro, to suppress the slave-trade, to organise legitimate commerce, and to open up the navigation of the Albert Lake by way of the Nile. The suppression of the slave-trade, it should be noted, was only one of the objects in view, and not the sole object, as is now frequently supposed. In fact, the slave-trade probably occupied a very minor place in Ismail's design, whatever it may have had in Baker's intentions. But the Khedive must have seen quite well that the territories to be annexed could never be properly governed so long as they were at the mercy of the slave-raiders; and, moreover, he was very anxious to figure well in the eyes of Europe. His sincerity in the matter of slavery has sometimes been questioned; but it is long since he passed from power, and we need not stop now to analyse his motives.

Sir Samuel Baker, then, was the first to carry the semblance of Government and authority into what we now know as the Equatorial Province of the Soudan. He took with him the sections of three steamers, to be put together and launched on the lake, and also two or three steel boats. He started from Khartoum with three steamers for river service, and his army of some fifteen hundred followers were towed up the river in boats.

From the first, Baker had to fight against the opposition of the slave and ivory-dealers, who intrigued with the native chiefs against him, and who also sapped the fidelity of his own followers. He also met with a great obstacle in the Nile—the formation of a "sudd"—which so delayed his progress, that one-half of the term of four years for which he had engaged was expired when he reached Gondokoro. This was in 1873, and for the next two years he was actively engaged in that work the story of which has been so graphically recorded in his well-known book, "Ismailia."

The broad results of Baker's rule were, that the country, nominally annexed to Egypt, extended to the frontier of Uganda



—of which Mtesa was then King—and included the Albert Lake. Three garrison stations were established, besides Gondokoro; the steamers were erected and put in commission; and a great supply of stores had been accumulated. In other words, Baker established a line of steam-navigation from Khartoum to the Lakes, and he annexed the whole valley of the White Nile to Egypt. But although some of the slave-traders were expelled from the country, traffic in slaves had not been stopped, and it had been found that the traders were prepared and determined to use every species of opposition to the new order of things. For the first time it began to be realised how vast, and powerful, and pervading was the iniquitous system which radiated from Khartoum, and which had its zealous supporters and intriguers even in Cairo.

We have spoken of a "sudd" in the river delaying Baker's progress, and as it was the same kind of thing which later cut off Emin from communication with Khartoum, a word of explanation is necessary. A "sudd" is caused by a vast growth of aquatic plants, which develop in the Upper Nile from the bottom so rapidly, that they intercept all the flotsam and jetsam that is being swept downwards with the floods. The growth, at first in the form of vegetable islands, gradually extends across the channel, and forms a practicable bridge, absolutely preventing the passage of boats. These vegetable barriers grow to immense size, and of prodigious density. That which obstructed Baker required the prolonged labours of seven hundred men with sharpened sabres to clear. In 1877, the plants began to form small islands again, and two years later they amalgamated into a fresh "sudd," which closed Emin's door to the north.

But we must go back to 1873, when Sir Samuel Baker left the province in the condition we have sketched, and returned to England. In February of the following year, 1874, Chinese Gordon arrived at Cairo in order to assume the work surrendered by Baker. He was then only a Colonel by rank, but already of world-wide reputation. Preliminaries were soon settled with the Khedive, and one of the arrangements was that the Bahr-el-Ghazal was to be added to his command, so that he might have control over the whole district frequented by the Danagla slave-hunters. By the following April Gordon

was at Gondokoro, exactly a year after Baker had left that place.

He did not find a very satisfactory condition of affairs. Gondokoro itself was surrounded by hostile tribes; and although the garrison numbered some seven hundred men, they could only communicate with the other stations by sending out large armed expeditions. These other stations were just able to hold their own, and no more. Government, in short, was at a standstill; and the Khedive had really no more authority there than he had at Timbuctoo. But there were the steamers, and an abundant supply of stores; and in a very short time Gordon worked a miraculous change.

He formed the station of Lado, to be the capital instead of, but quite near to, Gondokoro; and from there, for a distance of nearly four hundred miles to the south, he established a chain of stations within easy distance of each other. North and west of Lado he also went with the arm of authority and the principles of order. When he left, in 1876, there were twenty-five Governmental Stations in the province, with regular communication between them; there was peace with the native tribes; the soldiers were contented because they were being paid and well cared for; the revenue was improving; and the steamers were plying frequently both on the river and on the Albert Lake. Above all, the native chiefs loved and trusted him, and the slave-traders had been repelled at many points.

Let it not be supposed that Gordon had suppressed the slave-trade entirely. He had not had time to do that; but he had brought peace and order and just government into this immense territory under his sway, and he did it all with no fuss and little fighting. He had brought the country into a condition which, if maintained, would have effectually counteracted the slave-traffic in time.

But it was not maintained. After Gordon left, the command was, for a few months only, with Mason Bey, and then with Baroud Bey—Colonel Prout—but both of these officers had to come away suddenly, stricken with illness. Thereafter the province fell into the management of Egyptian officials—Vakeels—who undid all the good work that Gordon had done, and reduced the province to chaos once more.

One of Gordon's European officers was Emin, who acted as chief of the medical staff. In that capacity he had to travel

about the province a good deal; but Gordon sent him also on special diplomatic missions: notably on journeys to the kingdoms of Uganda and Unyoro—two sections of Central Africa which have bulked much, both in missionary records and in the recent narratives of Stanley's expedition. It was in works of this kind, and in his general capacity for dealing with the natives, that Emin succeeded in impressing Gordon. Still he was not in any administrative position while Gordon was at Lado.

After visiting England, Gordon returned to Egypt in 1878, in a new capacity—that of Governor-General of the whole Soudan. He took up his quarters at Khartoum, and one of his acts was to nominate Emin Governor of the Equatorial Province.

The legacy which Gordon had left for his successors in the province has been thus recorded:

"To keep the frontiers from the encroachment of the Soudan Government; to maintain the discipline and order already established; to improve the routes of communication; to introduce some other means of land transportation than porters; to solidify and extend the position of the provinces to the west; and to bring King Kabarega, of Unyoro, and King Mtesa, of Uganda, into such a position of acknowledged dependence that trade, instead of going to Zanzibar, would be turned down the Nile. It was not proposed to annex these countries, but to convince their rulers that they would be annexed if they did not behave themselves."

Instead of following out this policy, the Egyptian officials in temporary charge let the whole province go to wreck and ruin. When Emin was nominated to the Governorship the stations had become "hotbeds of oppression, vice, tyranny, and underhand slave-dealing." The stations themselves had fallen into disrepair through sheer indolence and neglect; the natives were oppressed with the burdens and irritated by the actions of the officials; revolts were incessant, and the province was over head and ears in debt.

Out of this chaos, and corruption, and demoralisation, Emin wrought a change even more marvellous than that wrought by Gordon. Within two years he had quieted all the native discontent; had brought the whole territory into a condition of law and order; had equalised taxation; had got rid of the corrupt officials, and

had made the people loyal to his Government. He had rebuilt all the stations; established a regular weekly post throughout his dominions; made roads; introduced camels and oxen for transport, instead of porters; re-organised his little army; and cleared out the slave-dealers from the whole province.

In 1878, when he assumed command, the finances showed a deficit of over thirty thousand pounds; by 1882, he had made them show a surplus of eight thousand pounds. Yet, during half of that time, the "sudd" in the Nile had stopped the steamer traffic with Khartoum, and he had to form new outlets for trade.

Then, as we showed in the former article, he introduced new industries to the people—taught them how to cultivate cotton, and indigo, and coffee, and rice, and sugar; how to brighten their villages with gardens, and how to make clothing for themselves and the troops. It was in this time of prosperity that he was visited by Dr. Felkin, who has thus written of Emin: "Getting rid of the leeches which sucked the life-blood from the inhabitants, he had replaced them by natives trained by himself; he had put an end to the wanton abuses of the old Egyptian station chiefs, and had shown to the natives that for honest work just pay must be rendered, and that by docile obedience they could live, not only at peace with themselves, but on terms of friendship with those whom they had previously regarded in the light of cruel taskmasters. A record such as this proves that my friend is what I have always said he was—a man apt to rule, slow to take offence, and capable, if only supplied with the necessary external aids, of becoming the most successful administrator for Central Africa which the world has hitherto dreamt of."

This is the testimony of an eye-witness of his work.

But the "external aids" were not forthcoming. The abdication of Ismail, the resignation of Gordon, the revolts in the Soudan, followed each other in rapid succession. Nobody had any time or thought for the Equatorial Province, and steamers which were being sent out from England for Emin's use got no further than Khartoum. They were still there when Gordon returned, in 1884, on his last and fatal mission, which closed as we all remember too well.

From 1882 Emin was practically cut off from the world, and in 1884 began his

time of peril and of dangerous isolation. The last three years of his sojourn must have been a continuous strain of anxiety, of ceaseless labour against constantly growing forces. The Mahdists were hemming him in on the North, and although he might have escaped himself to the South, he would not forsake the people and the cause entrusted to him by Gordon. Alone, and unaided, he has for years, in the heart of Africa, carried on the work of government, striving to retain his province for civilisation, steadily resisting the slave-dealers, who were surging back upon him under the support of the Mahdist successes, busied with military details, and yet never forgetting his functions of medical man—always hoping against hope for help and relief, but not for a “rescue” which was to sever him from his life-work.

Is it any wonder that he was undecided—torn with conflicting emotions—when Stanley at last reached him? Stanley's arrival was too late to save the province, for the troops had mutinied, and the officers were working either for their own ends, or in the interests of the Mahdi. Six months earlier, and Stanley at Wadelai might have helped Emin to beat back the forces of the False Prophet, whom Emin had so long successfully withstood, and might have retained the Equatorial Province as a bright oasis in the dark desert of Tropical Africa.

But it was not to be. Emin was found broken in power, in health, and in spirit, and he was virtually forced to march away with Stanley, turning his back upon all that had become most dear to him. Strange, and most pathetic incident this—the strangest, and one of the most pathetic in the whole history of Africa!

The task of carrying relief to Emin proved much more arduous than was contemplated; and there are many who hold that if the expedition had gone from the east—starting from the Zanzibar coast and going through Massai-land—it might have reached Emin's territory within six months.

It was the autumn of 1886 before a plan of relief was definitely organised. Sir William Mackinnon, associated with Sir Lewis Pelly, the Hon. Guy Dawnay, Mr. Burdett Coutts, M.P., Sir Francis de Winton, Colonel Grant, C.S.I., Lord Kinnaid, Sir John Kirk, and Messrs. Peter Denny, A. L. Bruce, and George S. Mackenzie, formed themselves into the Emin Relief Committee, and subscribed a fund

for expenses, to which the Egyptian Government added ten thousand pounds. Mr. Stanley, then in America, was offered, and accepted, the command by cable, and, at once crossing the Atlantic, arrived in England towards the end of December, 1886. After deliberation and consultation with the King of the Belgians—who, as Sovereign of the Congo Free State, placed at the disposal of the expedition all the resources of the State—it was resolved to adopt the Congo route.

In January, 1887, Mr. Stanley left for Egypt, and took, as European assistants, Major Barttelot, Captain Nelson, Lieutenant Stairs, Dr. Parke, Dr. Bonny, Mr. Jephson, Mr. Jameson, Mr. Ward, and Mr. Rose Troup. Of these, Major Barttelot and Mr. Jameson perished on the Aruwhimi; Messrs. Ward and Troup returned home invalided; and the rest have shared the toils and hardships of the march across Africa. The expedition was made up at Zanzibar, and went round the Cape by steamer to the Congo. That river was reached in March, 1887, and the upward movement at once began. Delays on the river, owing to the insufficiency of the transport, made it June before the Aruwhimi was reached. There, at Yambuya, some distance from the junction of the Aruwhimi with the Congo, a camp and dépôt was formed, and left in charge of Major Barttelot. On the twenty-eighth of June, 1887, the march to the Albert Lake began, and Stanley disappeared into the wilderness. He expected to reach Wadelai and be back again by Christmas; but he did not reach the Albert Lake until the end of the year; and it was April, 1888, before he met Emin. They remained together until the end of May, and then Stanley turned back to the Aruwhimi, to bring up his rear-guard and supplies, while Emin was to return to Wadelai and arrange with such of his people as wanted to depart from the province. In August, 1888, Stanley was again at Yambuya, to find that Barttelot had been murdered; but he did not get back to the Albert Lake, for the second time, until the eighteenth of January, 1889, which was just two years after he left London, in the hope of completing the whole work in about a year.

When Stanley got back to the Lake, it was to find that Emin and Mr. Jephson were prisoners at Wadelai; that the troops of the Equatorial Province had revolted; that the Mahdists had invaded the province

in force, and that some of the natives had gone over to the enemy. Emin's work was done, for his authority was overthrown, and the labours of twelve years had been apparently in vain. By-and-by the Pasha was released, and, almost broken-hearted, was carried off by Stanley, who began his march to the East Coast on the tenth of April, 1889, just one year after the explorer and the Pasha had first met. It was the month of December, 1889, before the whole party emerged into daylight once more, at Bagamoyo, a port within the German sphere of influence, opposite Zanzibar.

Thus Stanley's work has covered just about three years, and included, as we have seen, the traversing the whole breadth of the Dark Continent. The full story of this prolonged and most momentous expedition has yet to be told, and we may reserve judgement on its value until it has been told. But more interesting and instructive than the narrative of any adventurous explorer, must be the record of Emin's own experiences, observations, and scientific discoveries during his long and lonely exile. If Emin has preserved his journals, and is able to give them to the world, then we may look for the most important and interesting contribution to the literature of Central Africa that has ever been made. No European living has had such prolonged, continuous, and intimate acquaintance with the places, and peoples, and politics of the Dark Continent.

#### FOREST GATE SCHOOLS.

THE next station is Forest Gate! The forest itself is not perceptible, unless as a forest of houses, with the long roofs of factories or soap-works, with tall chimneys and stacks of timber, instead of foliage; with openings of wet, marshy wastes, where shining patches of water are indistinctly visible; with a canal gleaming through the mist, and barges darkly shadowed against the wintry glow. Nor are there any more suggestions of the forest when we reach the station; and the village, if it be a village, with its rows of small villas interspersed with shops, which face the sunshine pleasantly enough, and its various back streets freezing in the shade, and all varnished with the yellow mud of the district. Yet there is something like a ravine below, wreathed with the steam of passing trains,

and a fringe of trees in their bare wintry tracery, shows pleasantly beyond; but all so misty and indefinite in the hazy morning light, as to be endowed with a certain mysterious charm that further acquaintance might perhaps dispel.

Yet away from the station there begins something like open country, which may once have formed part of the great forest of Epping, where once the Lord Mayor and citizens of London would follow the wild deer with horn and hound; and this way lies Wanstead, with its flats and its park which was once a famous seat, and which is now a public pleasure-ground. And at some half-mile along the way in that direction stands a handsome range of solid brick buildings, set back at some distance from the road, with grass-plats and shrubs in front, and a tall flagstaff, like the mast of a ship, conspicuous from afar. There is a porter's lodge, too, and a porter visible within, while a deputy porter, in the shape of a bright-looking lad in serge jacket, cords, and a "Glengarry" cocked military fashion on the head, opens the gate for the visitor, and marshals him the way that he should go.

The way leads to a handsome entrance-hall, well warmed and covered with matting, to which hall a monumental aspect is given by an imposing marble tablet on either hand, which record how these, the "Forest Gate District Schools," were founded in 1854, under the management of a long list of district worthies, and transferred, at a later date, to another board of management. Yet, apart from the list of names of people who have mostly joined the great majority, and become merely the shadows of names themselves, these inscriptions convey no explicit information to the inquiring mind. What is a district school, after all, and why should Forest Gate be endowed with these imposing buildings, with this evidently complete and well-organised staff? Whence these boys, the hum of whose voices may be heard from some distant schoolroom, or these girls, of whom a glimpse has been seen, in their neat blue-serge dresses and white aprons?

The answer to all this is to be found in the Superintendent's office — quite an efficient-looking office, with tall desks and rows of official-looking volumes, and a secretary busy over forms and correspondence. The Superintendent himself is here and there and everywhere; but he is caught on the wing, and pleasantly offers all the information in his power. These



are district schools, then, as being formed under an Act of Parliament, passed so long ago as the 7th and 8th Victoria, which empowers Poor Law unions to group themselves into a district for the purpose of providing resident schools with the necessary staff and appliances for the educational and industrial training of children who may become chargeable upon the parish rates. These district schools are not universal throughout the country, for the scheme has not been adopted by perhaps the majority of Boards of Guardians; but London has taken freely and liberally to the system, and these district schools have been established at considerable cost, and generally on a complete and extensive scale, at various parts of the country round about London. The City of London and Saint Saviour's unions have their district schools at Hanwell. The South London unions have a large and complete establishment at Sutton, not far from the Banstead Downs. The West London parishes own a fine and extensive range of buildings at Ashford, near Staines, while Kensington and Chelsea have their own district schools at the pleasant village of Ewell, not far from the great Epsom racecourse. And then at Forest Gate we have the great and populous unions of Whitechapel and Poplar, comprising some of the poorest and most crowded quarters of the east end of London. And the inmates of the schools are many of them the children of the poorest of the poor, who have failed to keep a roof over their heads, and have been compelled to seek the shelter of the workhouse. Not that even these belong to the lowest social station, for to have a claim on the parish for relief implies a previous fixity of abode. And the wandering class who find an uncertain home in common lodging-houses generally contrive to keep clear of the workhouse, both for themselves and their children, who mostly go to recruit the shifting population of waifs and strays about the streets.

Yet in all these district schools there are children deserted and abandoned by one or both parents. Generally it is the father who absconds, tired, or perhaps hopeless of the task of providing for his brood. And in such cases it often happens that the mother will support herself and the more helpful of her children in the outside world, while the Guardians take charge of the rest, and send them to the district schools. Of course, the defaulting parent is looked for, but is rarely found; and even

if found, not much can be made of him, except to send him to prison, a course which does not, after all, increase the chances of his providing for his family.

At the present hour of the morning most of the boys and girls are doing their lessons in school, and our first general glimpse of the children of Forest Gate is in the spacious and airy schoolrooms, where the boys are going through their lessons according to the universal code. Yet are not all the boys here, for such of them as are old enough, and are physically fitted for a certain amount of labour, alternate a day's schooling with a day's work in field or garden, or in the workshops, or in some useful task about the establishment. At their school work the boys present are bright and intelligent. A large class is reading in full swing, and with very good intonation and emphasis, and they respond to the master's examination with great vigour and alacrity. There is something about a sunbeam and a glowworm in their lesson, and though these poor children cannot have had much personal experience of either in the crowded courts of Whitechapel, yet they know all about them, and a forest of hands are eagerly raised at each question put to them. Bright and jolly enough are the schoolboys; they are small, perhaps, for their age—true-born Londoners, with more sharpness than strength—but they look healthy enough, and as clean as new pins, and quite chirpy and cheerful.

There are more boys in the workshops outside. Here is the shoemaker's shop, presided over by a master shoemaker, who exhibits some of the work of his young apprentices with a good deal of honest pride. All the mending and patching required by the five hundred odd pairs of little boots and shoes, which are daily shuffling, and kicking, and rubbing themselves into holes, all the soleing, and healing, and toe-capping is done in this shoemaker's shop. And there is original work done as well. Each girl who leaves the schools for domestic service is supplied with a complete outfit in the way of necessary clothing, and an essential part of the outfit is two new pairs of boots, in which the stout and useful is supplemented by a certain amount of elegance; and these young ladies' boots are turned out very creditably by the young disciples of Saint Crispin.

Then there is the tailor's shop, where all the boys' clothing is repaired, and a good deal of new work done, in the way of

making trousers and jackets for newcomers. But to-day, instead of sitting cross-legged on their benches, the boys, and their master, the head tailor, are all busy sorting out the débris of clothing, all burnt and scorched, the salvage from the late fire. And it is the same with the young carpenters, at work upon charred beams and shattered presses, with only the chips and shavings in their workshop to testify to the ordinary daily work that is carried on there—the making of cases, shelves, and general fittings required in the establishment.

And heresabouts the odour and flavour of burnt materials still lingers in the air, and the memory of the late disaster, and the loss of life it entailed, casts a certain shade of seriousness and regret over the whole establishment. The burnt wing now presents itself to view, with its charred and shattered windows, and smoke-begrimed walls. Within, there is a sad solitude of blackened timbers, gaping floors, and the desolation of the complete ruin that fire has wrought. Yet, still intact and safe is the staircase leading into the yard—a wide and ample staircase, where all the inmates of the dormitories might have found safety. But the truth seems to be, that the poor children were suffocated in their beds by the smoke that rose from the mass of burning stores beneath; and we may hope that they passed peacefully away without any consciousness of the terrible scenes about them.

And yet there were few establishments, to all appearances, better protected against fire than these schools, with stand-pipes and hose on each floor, a constant water supply, and plenty of fire-buckets handy. But fire found out the weak spot, and that was probably due to faults of construction in the old building—for 1854 represents antiquity in this respect. The notion then was to build something like a barrack, with storehouses and offices below, and rows of dormitories above, and about as safe in case of fire as an Englishman's ordinary dwelling, if he escape from which alive, if once fairly alight, he has great cause for thankfulness.

The modern idea is to have, instead of the one huge barrack, a number of detached dwellings for dormitories, with no complications, in the way of storehouses or furnaces beneath, and with free circulation of air all round. And there is a very good example of such a building, ready to hand, at these very Forest Gate Schools.

This is the infants' block of buildings—a regular nursery establishment—where children are received from the age of two years and upwards. Here there is a free run from one end of the building to the other, with outside stairs of iron at each end, in addition to the staircases within. Within, as well as without, the air is pleasantly fresh and fragrant; the sunshine streams in at the open windows; the little beds, in long rows, are all as clean and neat as can be; if they were meant for little Princesses they could not be nicer. Perhaps real Princes and Princesses are not so carefully tended and looked after as these little children of poverty and misfortune.

Then, in a room below, we find the babes of the establishment—little urchins and little lasses, who can hardly speak plain, but who receive their visitors with loud crowing and gratulatory cries.

Another room contains a colony of children just a step higher on the ladder of life. It is almost dinner-time, and the little folks are seated round in their clean white pinafores, beating a joyous tattoo on the table with their spoons. From them, also, there is a loud shout of welcome. Evidently, the little ones are the pets of the establishment. They want to see pictures! And, by the way, nearly all the rooms are decorated with bright-coloured prints—the pretty children of the Christmas numbers, the friendly dogs, the horses, the lords and ladies gay of holiday impressions from the "Illustrated" or "The Graphic." These things brighten up and interest the children, and give them a glimpse of the world outside the walls of the school, with its infinite variety of weal and woe. But to return to the children, anxiously awaiting the midday meal.

"What is there for dinner, nurse?" asks the Superintendent, of a neat-looking attendant, who is keeping an eye upon the children.

Nurse is not quite sure; but the children know all about it.

"Iris' too," is shouted from half-a-dozen eager little throats; and Irish stew it proves to be by the fragrance of it.

But there is a snug little room with a bright fire, where a little dinner-party is assembled of a much quieter character: three or four children sitting up in their night-dresses, with white, wistful faces, and eyes pathetically large and dark, who seem only languidly interested in the

little delicacies provided for feeble appetites. There is a solemn beauty in one or two little faces, upon which consumption has set its fatal seal.

But, as for the sick nursery, where the ordinary invalids are treated, there are not many inmates, and those only suffering from trifling childish ailments. And the sick are quite as eager to see pictures as the well, and they take an equally intelligent interest in the coming dinner.

And the odour of Irish stew becomes still more noticeable, as, crossing a wide courtyard, we enter a dining-hall of good proportions, where the clatter of hundreds of spoons upon hundreds of pewter dishes, and the voices of hundreds of children—who enliven their meal with interjectional remarks—cause a vibratory murmur, that now rises to vehemence, and, again, sinks almost to nothing. The girls, as may be supposed, contribute the greatest vocal clatter; the boys make the most play with the pewter dishes. For the dining-hall is common ground, where girls and boys meet at meal-times, seated in their separate detachments, and at present too much occupied with Irish stew to have any thoughts to bestow on their neighbours. And the stew certainly is appetising, not the fraudulent dish which economical housekeepers sometimes impose upon us, composed of potatoes chiefly, with the tail ends of mutton chops and odd bits of fat sparsely planted therein; but the prizes in the Forest Gate stew are many and varied, and the mess is, therefore, suited to the average capacity of growing boys and girls.

As we leave the dining-hall we come to the source of the banquet, in the great kitchen, with its ovens and furnaces, its great coppers, where the food of five or six hundred children is prepared, its gas cookery apparatus, and other appurtenances of cooking on a grand scale—grand in point of number, that is. And while we are among the domestic offices, here is the laundry in a detached building—and such a laundry!—with all the best apparatus of English and American make. Here is a great steam mangle, that rolls to and fro majestically, or stops instantaneously at the touch of a lever; and further on a great English washing-machine, also driven by steam, with an ingenious reversing motion. And close by is an American invention, a hot cylinder of metal with subsidiary cloth-covered cylinders, which take hold of your bit of a shirt, we will

say, as if they were going to print a newspaper upon it, and deliver it next moment, wrung and smoothed and calendered, so that you might put it on if you were in a hurry without further preparation. And there are wonderful cages that fly round at the rate of who can say how many thousand revolutions a minute, and so that a basket of wet things, turned into one of these cages, comes out in about eight minutes just dry enough, and not too dry, for those other recondite processes. A laundry-maid murmurs something about “starched things,” of which the masculine mind has but an indefinite idea.

And it is always washing-day here, then; and the busy laundry-mistress is continually keeping her eye on things, and the laundry-maids whisk about great baskets of linen easily and noiselessly, in “skips” of American pattern; and the great machines are constantly on the whirl. There must be a power of washing here, certainly.

“Why, yes,” remarks the Superintendent; “take the one item of towels. Each child is washed five times a day, and for each ablution a clean towel is used. Say five times five hundred towels a day!”

That certainly figures out into a pretty big sum, and with other things in proportion! But the mention of towels brings us to the question of personal washing arrangements. Here, across more courts, are the bathing-quarters, with a new swimming-bath of full size which is to be used for bathing and swimming only, while the old one, which is but small, will be devoted to soaping and washing customers. But a complete ablution of all the children, night and morning, is effected in long rows of shallow troughs with perforated bottoms, by means of a rose or spout above the head of each child, which diffuses a fine spray over the whole person, and makes the task of soaping and rinsing an easy one. Here are, also, completely fitted lavatories, where the intermediate ablutions are effected, the principle being that no two children shall be washed in the same water or dried with the same towel. And these precautions are no doubt requisite in dealing with such large assemblages of children, where infectious or cutaneous disorders are so much to be guarded against.

By this time dinner is over, as we are reminded by the loud fanfare of a brass band. It is the boys' brass band, which marches proudly across the playground, playing some national air; and the boys

troop after it in loose formation, and are presently drawn up in line across the ground under the command of the drill-master, who soon dismisses them to their own diversions; for this is the play-hour of the school. All but a column of volunteers who follow him into the drill-hall, where there are dumb-bells, and Indian clubs, and various exercises to be gone through. For the boys of the band there are often openings in the regimental bands of the regular army, and the young musicians generally do well among their military comrades. But as for general enlistment, the boys leave school at fourteen, as a rule, and take their way in the world; and that is too early an age to join the army; so that if any of the boys eventually find their way into the ranks, there is no special record of the fact. But boys of the requisite physique are perhaps drafted on board the "Exmouth," and find their way into the navy or merchant-service. And the boys who have taken seriously to a craft, as shoemakers, tailors, or carpenters, often find employment in their respective vocations. But there is a growing difficulty with the managers of schools, as well as with the paterfamilias of private life—"What to do with the boys?"

With the girls, the matter is more simple: they are trained for domestic service. Before long, perhaps, the managers of our great educational establishments will recognise the fact that there are many other employments in which young women can earn a respectable livelihood; but at present it is difficult to see how the best intentioned efforts in that direction could be brought to any practical result.

Now, the general impression of those who have taken into their households girls from district schools, referring to them generally, without application to any particular school, is that, as a class, they are rather helpless. Accustomed to rely upon others, they lack the fibre of the home-bred girl—where the home is honest and sober—the girl who has had the perennial family baby under her charge as long as she can remember; who has managed the house when mother was out charring or washing; and who has acquired energy and self-reliance from the stress of circumstances.

Well, at Forest Gate they have made a promising attempt to give the girls a real, practical training in the duties of every-

day life. And this is in the form of a six-roomed house, which occupies part of one of the subsidiary blocks of building—a six-roomed house, with just such stoves, and furniture, and belongings as pertain to houses of that class in the world outside. Six girls are here under the training of a housekeeper, two as cooks, two as housemaids, and two as the "poor little generals." For these girls the steam-pipes, the elaborate machinery of the general establishment, have no existence. They cook on the little stove and in the small oven; they wash, and sweep, and keep tidy their own little home. The experiment, too, has been tried of sending the girls to market for the household, to lay in the stores, and keep the accounts; and in this way the girls are brightened up, and made to feel an interest in the movement of things about them.

And now we may take our leave of Forest Gate Schools, quite convinced that what may be called official philanthropy is doing a good work here, just as private philanthropy is doing good work in many a home and institution run on different lines. Certainly, if the cost of these public institutions is heavy, there is a good deal to show for it. Here hundreds of children, who otherwise might swell the ranks of helpless paupers, are carefully trained, taught habits of industry, and put in the way of earning a respectable living, infused, too, with an independent and helpful spirit.

Yet, before leaving the spot, let us take a general view of the scene from that lofty outside staircase, which shows the distant country, where there is still a little country left: the home fields, the extensive gardens, with their rows of winter vegetables; the boys at play in the open with tops and hoops, and a general clamour of voices. The girls also at play, less vociferously and energetically, in a covered courtyard; the hum of infant voices sounding within, as troops of little ones tramp noisily about, for it is their play-hour too.

Well, they are all "our boys" and "our girls," the children of the State, with no fathers or mothers who, in a general way, are worth anything to them, except the general community. And it is pleasant to think that they are so well cared for, and that they are happy, for happy they undoubtedly are; and we may hope that honest and happy lives are yet in store for the little foundlings of Forest Gate.



## THE WOULD-BES.

WHO and what are the Wouldbes, it will be asked. Are they a species of insect, cousin germane, for example, to the bumble bees; or a cross between a drone and a laborious wasp?

Nothing of the kind. The Wouldbes are of the human race, and of those extremely civilised members of it who are so much in the thrall of discontent, and so convinced of their own worth—potential, if not apparent—that they are for ever sighing to be other than they are. "If only I were like so-and-so, what could I not do! How I wish I were Willoughby Constantine, of Constantine Hall! People should then see what I am good for!"

This, then, is the characteristic of the Wouldbes; the phrase "I wish," or "If only I were," is ever in their mouth. It proclaims them as unerringly as the stentorian bellow: "To be sold by auction, etc.," proclaims to all his audience of the street that the town-crier is abroad.

The Wouldbes are not, as a rule, very iniquitous persons. That is the best that can be said of them. Yet perhaps their very merit in this matter is, at bottom, more of a vice than a virtue, for they would not be Wouldbes if they were not consistent in lethargy rather than in action, aspirants rather than strivers. The wicked man is generally a man of energy. His energy is perverted, of course; yet, in so far as it is energy pure and simple, it is laudable in him. He has a virtue which the Wouldbes lack.

You will find the Wouldbes in every walk of life, and among either sex in every period of life. It is not an immutable state of mind; yet there is a grievous fascination in the culture of it which makes it very hard for the adult Wouldbe to throw off the habit, and put his hand in earnest to the plough which shall furrow the great plain of his desires. The Wouldbe has sacrificed so persistently upon the altar of his creed, that the real has become less real to him than the fanciful. Life, to him, is a mirage. He knows that the sum of its delicious possibilities is quite beyond him; and so he has accustomed himself to viewing them as if they were ideal rather than actual possibilities. If you remonstrate with him upon his disgraceful inertia, he meets you squarely:

"I know," says he, "that I shall never

be what I would like to be. Why, then, should I not, at least, get what satisfaction I can from these pictures of the imagination?"

It were vain in such a case to say:

"Ah, dear Wouldbe, that is just where you go astray so ruinously. You beg the question. Uprise and try to be what you would be, instead of revelling in torpid fancies, howsoever sweet they may be."

Wouldbe shakes his head with an affectation of sageness that deceives even himself. No Solomon could better assume the air of one who has tried life, found it wanting, and resolved to dream rather than work in the future.

Among children, the Wouldbes, as opposed to those who are not Wouldbes, are as ten to one. It is right and normal in a child to be a Wouldbe. He wishes he were a man like his father; a soldier like his uncle; as much beloved as his white-haired, benevolent old grandfather; as rich as that consummate spendthrift, his mother's first cousin. This is all as it should be. The youngster is like a greyhound held in leash, and his "wishing" is comparable to the straining of the dog against the leather. If the dog were to stand in calm contentment, with its nose in the air, looking straight before it, the dog's owner might perchance think it a very fine figure of a dog, or even a remarkably philosophic animal; but he would not give much for its chance of slaying the hare. It is in the nature of a greyhound, properly constituted, to be dissatisfied with its fetters, and to pull and struggle for freedom. So also the child—if it be a sane, strong child—must wish this and that; otherwise, the inference is that it has already, though a child, come to such maturity as it will come to, for development and aspiration are the same things. If the child has done with wishing, the odds are that it has finished its career of growth. It may, indeed, become a foot or two taller, or even compress a few more so-called attainments into its brain. But the latter, in its case, are likely to be merely so much intellectual lumber—anything rather than a blessing; and it will matter very little to the spiritual kernel of the child whether the husk grow to six feet or a hundred feet in height. The kernel has done growing; and that, after all, is the main thing.

Indeed, there are no such Wouldbes as children. They are the only Wouldbes to

whom nature and reason, in conjunction, agree to give license. Hence there is no shame upon the child who wishes this or that. And it is not even a fault when its wishes get as extravagant as the romances of the age of chivalry. Such wishes are an intellectual exercise, as beneficial in their way as are swings and gymnastic poles to the body. The City financier who is a millionaire at fifty, may even, though he knows it not, owe his success and his banker's balance to his early, eager wish for a million of money. Such a wish, once conceived, of its own nature compelled him to think of the means of attaining it, and he has become what he is as the legitimate result of untiring industry and concentration, the effect of his childish resolves for the sake of his childish desire.

It is the same with other aims. The poet in a pinafore may, if his wishes be fitly ardent, and his latent abilities sufficiently vast, blossom into a laureate. But, unless he be a Wouldbe, he has no likelihood of such a dignity.

And so, also, with great travellers and men of science, politicians and evangelists. I make bold to say that each and all of them were staunch and fervid Wouldbes in the nursery. The one discovers the source of a river, or adventures upon the North Pole; another invents the phonograph; a third becomes the Premier of a decade; a fourth wins a fateful battle; and the fifth dies what is called an heroic death, Bible in hand, among the cannibals—all because, as children, they were Wouldbes of uncommon energy.

The child is father to the man in nothing more emphatically than in the nature and intensity of its aspirations.

But to recur to the Wouldbes among men and women.

Their condition, though unfortunate, is not uniformly sad and deplorable. It may be that the fault is not wholly their own. Who, for instance, can blame the woman who has passed the line of youth, and who, with full assurance that, as a wife, she could have made some man's life happy, and, therein, her own more happy, now and then sighs, like an inveterate Wouldbe, "Ah, if only my husband had found me"? Of course, she is too sensible a creature to harp long on so dolorous a note of desire. But it will sound at times. And, really, it does her no harm. She is no worse or more lethargic a woman after the wish, than before it.

There are a multitude of kindred cases,

which need no exact illustration. The test is ever the same. If the Wouldbe weakens in character or energy under the influence of the aspiration, it is a pernicious wish, of the kind to be scouted. Otherwise, it is a cordial, a soporific, or a sufficiently agreeable indulgence, harmful only when taken in excess.

It must not, however, be thought that the disappointed Wouldbe is wholly a neutral force in the lives of others, because he is, as a rule, no very strong doer of evil. He is apt to become a very unpleasant person indeed. At the outset, when he had plenty of hope in him, he may have been a genial man enough; one more ready to help than embarrass a fellow man. But, under the strain of frequent failing, due to unmitigated barren wishing, the milk of his human kindness goes sour. He is less to blame for this than the very human nature of which he is an expression. Yet, the preliminary fault is his; and so he is responsible for his own degradation.

Now a soured Wouldbe is a very serious creature to reckon with. He looks upon the success of others with a jaundiced eye. Thus looking, he is sure to think that such success is due to causes which even a better man than he might term improper. And, with such thoughts in his mind, disgusted with his own failure, and envious of his fellow-man's good fortune, he passes cruel judgement upon the prosperous one.

From Wouldbes of this class are recruited the vast body of calumniators and cavillers who so largely season the banquet of life. They discreetly hide behind a rock or a tree, and watch the battle before them. Safe from all stray bullets, and particularly secure from sabre cuts, they are able to observe with a keenness at which the rest of us—who are preciously busy with our guns and swords—are likely to be astounded. But they are also quite out of the way of honour. Promotion is not for those who hide behind rocks instead of fighting. And so the temptation is irresistible to slander the very warriors who, in the battle, have most distinguished and brought attention upon themselves. The unhappy Wouldbe thinks that, by so doing, he exalts himself. Better, he says, to do nothing and sin not, than to be an active agent of wrong towards others. It is the most idiotic sophistry in the world; but it contents the poor perverted and conscience-stricken Wouldbe.

You should visit such a Wouldbe as

this if you want to hear what may be called the seamy side of the character of your and his common acquaintance. None can misinterpret so acutely as he. If you remark upon the happiness of the domestic life of your friend Spes, it will be odd if he do not wrinkle his forehead, to give his eyebrows that peculiar curve of incredulity which says so much at so little cost. "My dear fellow," perhaps he says, with cautious innuendo, "take my word for it, all is not so smooth with Spes, as it appears to be." Really, he knows no more than he declares; but his words sometimes fall on the soil that befits them, and the consequences then may be grievous.

But I am sorry to say that the most calamitous of such Wouldbes are of the gentler sex. The girl who has just made a good match; the woman whose robust health makes her complexion seem perennial, or whose figure wins masculine admiration; these are the conventional butts of the feminine Wouldbe. As a rule, victims of these classes are well able to take care of themselves. A good match brings contentment in its train; and the contented wife can afford to laugh at the lips of slander. And the woman whose constitution favours her personal appearance is not apt to be hypersensitive. It is upon less-favoured victims that the Wouldbe's venom works most disastrously. Upon them, truly, the practised Wouldbe can, like Lady Sneerwell, "do more with a word or a look than many can with the most laboured detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it."

I have said that the Wouldbes are to be found of all ages. In comment upon this, it is curious to mark that, except in individuals who have given their evil dispositions full exercise, the Wouldbe grown old is often a very charming fellow. It is in the middle of the course that he is liable to fall into temptation. Afterwards he bows his head and looks with more charitable eyes upon a world in which he has not played the part he ought to have played. And so, having cried *peccavi*, the old, innocent enthusiasm of his childhood recurs to him. He is, perhaps, more of a Wouldbe than ever he was; but his aspirations do not now centre in himself. He takes his nephews or his grandchildren by the hand and encourages their ardour by wishing for them instead of himself. "If only I had my life again before me, my dear boy," he

will say to one of them, "as you have yours, this is what I should like to do." And then he builds Spanish castles mountain high, as heedless of foundation-stones as if he were still a child.

Indeed, it may be said that, of two men, the one an old Wouldbe who has failed, and the other a successful citizen of the world, the former is likely to be more useful as a stimulant to the young than the latter, and is much more likely to endear himself to them. The Wouldbe may be anything rather than brilliant, except in his aspirations. He may even be what the citizen of the world calls him—an ass of the first water. All the same, he will win hearts. Time, which has put the snow upon his head, has not abated the sprightliness of his fancy in the line that is peculiarly his. One moment, with a sigh of regret, he will hold himself up to his juniors as a warning; but the next, his eye will brighten again under the influence of a flash of newly-begotten expectation or desire, and the old "I wish," will be heard on his tongue.

It is a pity that the average Wouldbe cannot, at the age of fifteen, go off into a deep sleep of fifty years, or so. Then, at the awakening, he would realise that it were vain to expect the fruition of his various impetuous desires; he would, perforce, be contented; and he would have none of those remorseful pangs which even the best-controlled Wouldbe cannot escape, when circumstances force him to look down the vista of the years from old age towards youth.

## THE STORY OF DORIS CAIRNES.

A SERIAL STORY.

By the Author of "*Count Paolo's Ring*," "*All Hallow's Eve*," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER IX.

It would be almost impossible to imagine a greater or more unlooked-for change in any one's life than the change which Miss Joan's death brought into Doris's. The girl had always thought that her aunt was not nearly so poor as she made herself out to be, and that the petty economies, in which her soul delighted, were altogether unnecessary; but she had never for a moment imagined that Miss Joan was in reality a rich woman, and her surprise was indeed great when the lawyer, who

rode over to the Red House, as soon as he heard the news, and, much to Doris's relief, volunteered to make all the necessary arrangements for the funeral, told her so.

"I must congratulate you, my dear Miss Cairnes. You have led a wretched life so far; but that will all be altered now, I am glad to say. Poor Miss Mordaunt made her will the day before yesterday, and left all her property, with the exception of a small legacy to Margot, to you unconditionally. You will be a rich woman, my dear. Miss Joan was worth sixty thousand pounds if she was worth a penny. She had a splendid head for business; she ought to have been a man," Mr. Pearson added, regretfully.

Doris gazed, with wide-open, incredulous eyes, at the speaker.

"Sixty thousand pounds! Impossible!" she cried. "Why, sometimes we had scarcely enough to——" She checked herself, suddenly. "I mean she always said she was so poor," she added, rather confusedly.

"I dare say. It runs in the blood," Mr. Pearson—who fully understood the interrupted sentence—answered emphatically. "The Mordaunts were always either spend-thrifts or misers: went either to one extreme or the other. But it is true, Miss Doris, all the same. You will believe it soon enough, and, startling though I dare say the news is to you now, will soon enough get used to it. There is nothing so easy, my dear young lady," added the lawyer with a smile, "as to get accustomed to possessing money; nothing so difficult as to get accustomed to doing without it," he added with a shrug of his shoulders.

Doris soon proved the truth of his words. Once the first surprise over, she accepted the change in her position, and deputed herself under it with a quiet dignity and grace which surprised everybody. She was of age, and entirely her own mistress; and, although she was perfectly willing to listen to the suggestions and advice with which Mrs. Ainslie, the Vicar's wife, and Mrs. Pearson overwhelmed her, she quietly arranged her plans and thought out her future for herself.

The Red House was papered and painted, and restored as nearly as possible to its pristine glories. It had been a fine old house once, in its palmy days; and the great art upholsterer, into whose hands Doris committed it, was loud in his admiration of the beautiful oak panelling

and the antique furniture, which was stowed away in the unused bedrooms. There was not a house in the county to equal it, he declared enthusiastically, as he pocketed her cheque and looked round complacently on the changes he had wrought in the long-neglected rooms.

Doris smiled at his enthusiasm; but she, too, was well pleased with her beautiful old house and the gardens, which skilful hands had transformed into a little paradise. There was one little corner of the garden, however, which Doris would not have altered, and that was the sunny corner by the south wall, where the peaches grew, and where she and Laurence had dreamed their dreams together; where Paul Beaumont had pleaded his cause in vain; where the happiest and the bitterest hours of her life had been spent! That corner of the garden seemed bound up in her life; nay, was a very part of it, Doris thought! She could not bear it to be altered. So the lawn was mowed, and the trees pruned, and the tall dahlias and hollyhocks trimmed; but no material changes were made. The moss-covered log under the apple-tree still lay there. Doris used to sit there sometimes and think of the past days.

She did not, however, have any more time for meditation now than in the old days. She had quite as many duties, though of a different kind, and led quite as busy a life as ever. She was sadly conscious of her own deficiencies and ignorance, and had, acting under Mrs. Ainslie's advice, engaged a lady to reside with her as governess and companion; and, what with study and visiting—for all the county people had called on and held out the hand of friendship to Miss Mordaunt's niece and heiress—her time was fully occupied.

Mrs. Robson, her companion, was a distant connection of Laurence Ainslie's, and perhaps this fact was of as much importance to Doris as the fact of all the virtues and accomplishments, which, according to Mrs. Ainslie, she possessed. Doris was a little shy with her at first; but she soon grew much attached to her, and a steady friendship, never afterwards interrupted, sprang up between the two women. Mrs. Robson had great tact, she was an accomplished, well-read woman, had travelled much, and mixed much in society; and Doris, under her care, soon lost the little gaucheries and the awkwardness born of her isolated life, and acquired a perfect



grace of mien and charm of manner which surprised and pleased all with whom she came in contact. There was not a mother in the county who would not have been pleased to welcome Doris as a daughter-in-law; but so far, although she had had several eligible offers, she had quietly but decisively refused all.

"I do not think I shall ever marry," she said, quietly, to Mrs. Robson, "and certainly not for some time. I want to travel and see the world first."

And so as soon as the autumn of the year which followed her aunt's death arrived, Doris carried out a long-cherished dream, which she had never hoped to realise, and with Mrs. Robson went to Italy for the winter.

They returned to England in May, and spent a few weeks in London, and while there, Doris and Laurence Ainslie met again for the first time since his marriage.

They met by chance at an At Home, given by a Lady Clifford, whom Doris had met in Rome, and with whom she had struck up a great friendship. She was standing talking to her hostess, when Laurence entered, and she drew back a little, and waited until he had greeted Lady Clifford, and watched him with a curious mingling of pain and pleasure in her heart.

He was very much altered, she thought; he was as handsome as ever, but he looked worn and haggard, and much older than he had any right to look. The deep lines on his forehead, and under his eyes, ought more properly to have belonged to the face of a man of fifty than of twenty-eight.

A great throb of pity stirred Doris's heart as she looked at him. He was a successful man as the world counts success; but he did not look like a happy man, she thought—oh, not one-half as happy as the old Laurence, her boy-lover of years ago! She waited till some new guest claimed Lady Clifford's attention, then she stepped forward, and touched his arm lightly with her fan.

"Have you quite forgotten me, Laurence?" she said; and then he turned and saw her, and in an instant the lines and wrinkles were gone, and the dark shadow of discontent had vanished from his eyes, and Laurence, young, and smiling, and handsome as of old, was holding her hand in a tight clasp, and pouring out a flood of eager questions.

They came so fast that Doris could hardly find an opportunity of answering them; she could only smile, and nod, and put in a word or two now and then, and looked, meanwhile, so sweet and pretty with her smiling eyes upraised to his, full of a perfect contentment and pleasure, that those standing near turned to look at her, and more than one asked who the beautiful girl talking to Ainslie the artist was.

Laurence noticed the admiring, curious glances, though Doris was blissfully unconscious of them, or, indeed, of anything, save that she was with him again, and his heart beat with an odd pang of jealousy and regret.

Doris stood before him perfectly dressed in a gown of softly-falling silk which was neither green nor blue, but a mixture of both, with rare flowers resting among the lace which veiled her white neck, and a jewelled arrow gleaming among her crown of chestnut plaits. She, too, was changed outwardly, for she was taller, statelier, and more beautiful than he had ever thought it possible for her to be; but he felt instinctively that she was not changed in reality, that she was just as true, and tender, and loyal as the little maiden in the shabby, blue frock with whom he had loved to linger in the old garden years ago.

"What a fool I have been!" Laurence thought, bitterly.

They spoke of those old days by-and-by, when Laurence had found a quiet seat behind some tall palms and foliage plants in the little conservatory. They spoke of them, and of their old friendship, and of the changes that had come with the passing years; but Doris noticed that although Laurence was very ready to talk of his work and of his child, he never mentioned his wife; and that once when Doris asked if Mrs. Ainslie was with him that evening, he had given a rather disagreeable laugh, and had answered curtly that his wife did not care for society, and rarely went out.

"I shall come soon and call on your wife," she said, as, having put her into her carriage, he stood by the window for a moment. "I am so anxious to see her and my little namesake Doris."

Laurence started, and said something hastily, but she did not catch the words, and as he spoke the carriage moved on, and left him standing on the pavement; but she interpreted them as an assent, and

on the following afternoon she ordered her carriage, and went to make her call on Mrs. Ainslie.

Laurence lived in Kensington, in a large, old-fashioned house with bay-windows, and in front a long, narrow lawn, which was divided from the street by tall railings and a thick belt of shrubs. The garden was pretty, but it had a somewhat neglected look, Doris thought, as, leaving her carriage at the gate, she went up the winding path and rang the bell; and the house also had a forlorn air. The steps and little outer hall looked as if they had not felt the touch of a broom for some days, for they were littered with fallen twigs and leaves and scraps of paper. In one of the front windows the Venetian blind was broken; and the untidy servant, who after some delay opened the door with one hand, while she flung on her cap with the other, stared at Doris as if visitors were somewhat of a rarity in that establishment. Her mistress was in, she said in answer to Doris's enquiry for Mrs. Ainslie; but she did not know whether she could see any one. If the lady would walk into the drawing-room she would enquire.

Doris assented, and followed her into a drawing-room, evidently rarely used, and where the dust lay thick on everything; and after an unsuccessful struggle with the broken blind, the girl left her alone while she went to tell Mrs. Ainslie of her arrival.

Doris, left to herself, looked round the room, and inwardly marvelled how Laurence, with his artistic taste and keen perception of the beautiful, could endure to have such a room in his house. There was no fault to be found with the furniture; the piano was pretty; the chairs and couches, of some rare kind of wood, were gracefully shaped and covered with rich velvet tapestry; a few beautiful water-colours hung on the walls, but these were interspersed with gaudy oleographs, coloured photographs of actresses, and cheap Japanese fans; and on the chairs were tricky antimacassars, tied up with bright-coloured ribbons and trimmed with cheap lace. The tables were crowded with all kinds of rubbish in the way of china animals—dogs and cats and elephants, and quite a bewildering assortment of the same covered the mantelpiece, which was of beautifully-carved wood, and looked strangely out of place there.

Doris thought of her own drawing-room at the Red House, the pretty room, with its soft, harmonious colouring, panelled

walls, and polished floor, and the rich drapery which hung by the windows and over the door, and gave just the touch of colour and brightness which the sombre room needed. Laurence would like that room, Doris thought, rightly conjecturing that he rarely set foot in his own drawing-room; that there his wife's tastes reigned supreme.

By-and-by, after she had waited some time, a hurried footstep and the swish of a silk dress came along the passage; then the door opened rather noisily, and Mrs. Ainslie came in.

Laurence had sent Doris his wife's portrait painted by himself shortly after their marriage; but had she not known that it was Mrs. Ainslie who stood before her, she would certainly have failed to recognise the slim, fair girl of the portrait in this coarse, red-faced woman, who held out her hand and assured her, in a somewhat loud and not particularly refined voice, that she was glad to see her at last; that she had often wished to see the old friend Laurence used to talk so much about.

"Used, I may truly say, for he rarely condescends to talk to me at all now," she said, with a harsh laugh. "Take my advice, Miss Cairnes, don't get married. I can say to you, as an old friend of Laurence's, what I wouldn't say to any one else."

And then to Doris's intense disgust and annoyance, she drew up a chair to her side and launched into an eloquent diatribe against Laurence; his neglect, his fickleness, the way in which, while always gadding about himself, he left his wife at home; his miserliness and bad temper—all were passed in review before Doris's disgusted, astonished eyes. Was the woman sane, she wondered, that she could thus speak of her husband to a stranger? She drew herself up, and, finding that it was no use trying to stem the flood of Mrs. Ainslie's eloquence, sat, growing momentarily more stately and colder in her manner, and listened in silence.

Where had the charms, over which Laurence had so often rhapsodied, vanished, she wondered? True, the golden hair was still bright and abundant, and the eyes, "blue as a bit of the blue sky," were still blue and bright, though not particularly clear just then; but the once-exquisite complexion had grown coarse and muddled; the once-delicate features had also grown coarser, and the whole face

had lost its original refinement, and had become vulgar and common.

Yes, there was no denying the fact, Laurence's wife was vulgar. By-and-by, too, a dreadful suspicion, awakened by Mrs. Ainslie's thick, indistinct voice, and the incoherency of her sentences, and also by a disagreeable odour as if of spirit, imperfectly disguised with Eau-de-Cologne, which hung about her, arose in Doris's mind. Was it possible that Laurence's wife was intemperate; that she had had more to drink than was good for her, she wondered? Oh, poor Laurence! If Doris had felt sorry for him before, she felt ten times more sorry now!

She took advantage of a pause in Mrs. Ainslie's conversation, caused by want of breath, to ask to see the child—her little god-daughter—and Mrs. Ainslie first rang the bell, and, finding that nobody condescended to take any notice of it, went to the door and screamed out directions to some invisible "Maria" to bring Miss Doris down at once. She did not appear, however, for some time, which was spent, as Doris concluded, in a hasty washing of face and hands, and the donning of a muslin pinafore, tied up with gay ribbons and wide sash ribbon, which imperfectly hid her ragged frock from view. She was a pretty, delicate-looking child, more like her father than her mother, but with the latter's golden hair and blue eyes. Doris fancied that she seemed half afraid of her mother, for, although she went readily enough to Doris, and seemed perfectly content as she sat on her knee and played with her watch-chain, she watched Mrs. Ainslie with furtive glances as if not quite sure of what mood she was in, or whether or not she approved of her presence in the drawing-room.

Doris tried to make her talk; but she was too shy to say more than a "yes" or a "no," and even these were uttered in a half-frightened whisper, and accompanied by those furtive glances at her mother which pained Doris keenly.

By-and-by, however, the door opened, and Laurence, who had been told of Doris's visit, came in. The child gave a little shriek of delight, sprang from Doris's knee and flew across the room to meet him with a shrill "Papa, papa!" and Laurence took her in his arms and kissed her, and stroked her tangled curls, with an odd mixture of love, and pride, and pain in his face.

"You have made friends already, I see,"

he said as he took a seat by Doris's side, and the child looked at her and smiled, and babbled something about "pretty, nice lady," into her father's ear, "do you think she is like me?"

"Ah, she's like you in more ways than one, Laurence," Mrs. Ainslie interrupted. "She is just as obstinate as you are, every bit. I was just telling Miss Cairnes so before you came in. We have been having a nice long talk, she and I; and I've been telling her how you neglect me, and how lonely I am," Mrs. Ainslie added.

Laurence shrugged his shoulders.

"Not a very interesting subject for Miss Cairnes's ears," he said, carelessly. "Doris, my pet, this is the lady papa has so often talked to you about, who lives in the beautiful house in the country, where you are to go some day, when you are a little bit bigger, you know."

"I know!"

Little Doris nodded and looked up at the visitor with shining eyes.

"Where the bees is, and the peaches. When may I go?"

"Very soon, dear."

Doris turned to Mrs. Ainslie:

"May I take her back with me, when I leave town? The change will do her good. She does not look very strong," she said.

"Oh, she's strong enough; but there, if you care to be bothered with the brat, I'm quite willing," Mrs. Ainslie cried with a shrill laugh.

It was not a pleasant visit. Laurence was so obviously uncomfortable and ill-at-ease, that more than once Doris found herself wishing she had never come. Two or three times she rose to go; but each time Mrs. Ainslie detained her, and begged her to remain a little longer.

"It is quite a treat to have a visitor," she declared. "I am so much alone, and I see so little of Laurence—oh, you needn't frown like that, Laurence, I am only telling the truth," she went on, with her shrill laugh—"one is at liberty to speak the truth to an old friend like Miss Cairnes, and you can't deny that you do leave me a great deal alone."

"Is that my fault? You know you will never—"

Laurence checked himself hastily. He was, evidently, much ashamed of his wife's bad taste in thus thrusting domestic dissensions upon her visitor, and he tried to lead the conversation into less personal topics. Doris seconded him; but their

efforts were not very successful. Mrs. Ainslie seemed incapable of being interested in, or of talking about, anything but her own affairs; her troubles with servants; her ailments—she looking, meanwhile, the picture of health; and, most fruitful topic of all, her husband's neglect and indifference. Laurence gave up the attempt to stem the tide at last, and leant back in his chair, with little Doris's head on his breast, pale and frowning, with compressed lips and gloomy eyes, and listened in silence to his wife. It was evidently a relief to him when Doris, at last, in spite of Mrs. Ainslie's entreaties, insisted upon taking her leave.

"You will come again, soon? Now do," Mrs. Ainslie said, as she held Doris's hand. "I am generally at home in the afternoons, and you are the only one of Laurence's friends I ever felt I could chum in with—they are all so stiff and pokey. Now, you will come?"

Doris murmured something in reply, and then, as she stood on the steps with Laurence, waiting till her carriage drove up, she said, very quietly:

"Would you like me to call again, Laurence?"

Laurence hesitated, gave her a swift glance, then he sighed.

"If you would not dislike it very much, Doris! Of course, I know——" he hesitated, "there can be no pleasure to you in doing so; but, as she says, you are the only one of my friends whom she likes, and I think—I hope——"

Again he hesitated. Doris glanced up at him, and the look in her eyes was so full of pity and love, that he turned pale and trembled.

"Don't look at me like that, dear," he said, in a quick, pained voice. "I was a fool—I never knew how great a fool, till now! Yes, come sometimes, Doris. Most of my early friends seem to have drifted away from me now; don't let me lose you also, dear!"

"Never, Laurie," Doris answered, earnestly, "and, if she will let me, I will be your wife's friend, as well."

Doris was as good as her word. Somewhat to Mrs. Robson's disapproval, she invited Laurence and his wife to dinner; called for the latter in her carriage, and drove with her in the Park; often returning with her to afternoon tea; or, sometimes, the carriage would be sent back empty, and Doris would remain to dinner with her friends.

For some time it did really seem as if the good results which Laurence had hoped from Doris's friendship were to be realised. Mrs. Ainslie took a great fancy to her, was constantly inviting her to the house, and, when there, pressing her to remain, and was always on her best behaviour when in her presence. And Doris, for Laurence's sake, tried to shut her eyes to his wife's vulgarity and coarseness, and to hope that these were the worst of her faults—that at heart she was true, and genuine, and affectionate.

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